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ABSTRACT

The basic reading skills learned in the primary grades do not equip students with sufficient skills to read everything they need to read through school. Hence all teachers, regardless of the grade level or subject they teach, should know what the fundamental reading skills are and how to teach them to children who need help with increasingly more difficult and varied subject matter textbooks. In addition to phonics, picture clues, sight words, context clues, structural analysis, and dictionary usage are useful decoding tools. The comprehension skills advance from literal comprehension through interpretation and critical reading to creative or individual reading. Students should be taught study skills in their content classes because each subject carreis its own vocabulary, and there are unique differences in skills used in various subject fields. Learning to read fluently and rapidly is another basic skill to be developed since there are many different kinds of materials and purposes for reading. And after the primary grades, all reading skills can best be developed using actual materials in subject area classes. (TO)

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The Fifth IRA World Congress in Reading
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THE CLASSROOM TEACHER's RESPONSIBILITY TO THE DISABLED READER

The disabled reader is an international phenomenon. Every country has its children who are having difficulty in learning to read.

I plan to give a very practical talk today about basic skill areas in reading which are common to reading instruction in all languages in your respective countries, and which also are essential for all disabled readers to master.

Reports from countries everywhere indicate that the number of disabled readers is increasing year by year, and educators are bewailing this serious situation. What can the classroom teacher do about this? I will try to give some suggestions.

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TEACH READING BEYOND THE USUAL READING INSTRUCTION ALLOTMENT OF GRADES

Every teacher needs to be a teacher of reading regardless of the grade level or subject he or she teachers. Wherever and whatever children study in school they have to read. Learning to read basic reading materials in the primary grades doesn't equip them to read everything that they need to read all through school. Hence teachers beyond the usual reading instruction period should make it their business to know what the fundamental reading skills are and how to teach so they can assist children who need help as they pass on to higher levels and increasingly more difficult and varied subject matter textbooks.

At present the levels at which reading is taught vary. Many schools teach reading only in grades one to three, others one to six, a few one to seven or eight, and a very few more one to ten. In some cases a reading specialist teaches remedial reading to all secondary students who need it.

If and when we have reading taught through the grades and in high schools all over the world we probably shall have conspicuously fewer children suffering from reading disability. This is a worthy goal for classroom teachers to advocate.

TEACH SEVERAL WORD RECOGNITION SKILLS

Word recognition is the most basic of all basic reading skills. If a child can't recognize the names and meanings of word symbols, he or she just can't read. Very often disabled readers are deficient in this area.

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Once in a great while we find a child who has acquired the reading skills by himself or herself. Such a child, of course, is the extreme opposite ~~of~~ to the disabled reader. It is refreshing, though, to hear about such a case and I would like to tell you about one.

An amusing description about a child who taught herself to read is given by the author of the Pulitzer prize winning novel TO KILL A MOCKING BIRD. It reads like this:

Jem said of his four-and-a-half-year-old sister, ". . . Scout there's been readin' since she was born, and she ain't even been to school yet." Then upon entrance in first grade, Scout, whose real name was Jean Louise, was asked to read something that Miss Caroline wrote on the chalkboard and she read it so well that Miss Caroline was visibly vexed. Miss Caroline then had her read most of the first reader and other readers and finally she asked her to read the stock market quotations in the Mobile Register. Jean Louise read beautifully in all of these situations. All of this time Miss Caroline's irritation was building up and she finally exploded: "Tell your father to stop teaching you. It will interfere with your learning to read in school." Jean Louise said that her father didn't teach her, and then she began soliloquizing to herself on how she did learn to read and she finally decided that it just came like learning to fasten the flap on the back of her union suit without looking around.

It is rare, indeed, that a teacher of beginning reading receives a pupil who has taught himself or herself to read so proficiently. In the majority of instances, the teacher has to

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teach reading from "the ground up" and word recognition is of great importance. Some are still under the impression that the use of phonics is the only technique to be taught. While phonics is a valuable tool there are several other very useful procedures ~~for attacking new words~~. Every child should have all of these in his or her repertoire.

The use of picture clues is a word recognition process. This technique is most useful of course at beginning stages in which pictures are definitely designed to lead into what is said beneath them. Picture clues are useful, however, throughout the grades and I believe we should help children to employ these to a greater extent than most teachers do. All texts in all subjects are really beautiful picture books at this time. These pictures should be utilized fully both in word recognition and meaning activities.

Often teachers prepare and use picture-word cards and let children use them also in games and various activities. Each card contains a picture with the appropriate word beneath it, the set of cards represent words children will soon need in their basic reading. These cards are very useful.

Then there are sight words to teach. The teaching of sight words has been most abused by teachers of all the word attack skills. Developing a new reader lesson by having children memorize an isolated list of words on the chalkboard or drilling them day after day with words on flash cards are practices frowned upon by most authorities at present.

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Durrell tells of an incident which illustrates the fallacy of depending upon the technique of flashing word cards. A certain boy infallibly pronounced the word children when shown to him on a flash card but couldn't read it in his reader. He declared that he had never seen the word before. He was then shown the word on the flash card which he pronounced correctly as usual and when asked how he knew the word was children, he replied "By the smudge over the corner."

The point is that we can't always depend upon words learned from flash cards to be functional when the child is reading from text.

The nouns and verbs usually don't give much trouble. Such words as where, this, she, had, etc. are difficult for many children. It is desirable to teach these in context. An example of one way of doing this is as follows: the teacher guides the children to give some sentences growing out of their experiences which contain certain sight words needing attention. The sentences are written on the board and various practice activities take place.

Now we come to the use of context clues which is an important word-getting process.

Throughout the grades the teacher should provide skillful comments and questions guiding children to make use of context clues.

Here is an example:

Ted was reading the paragraph below:

"Fred and Uncle Bob were up early. Fred helped to wash the breakfast dishes."

Ted failed to recognize "breakfast". "Well, if they were up

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early, what meal would they have had at which dishes were used," asked Miss Lowe. "Breakfast" replied Ted and continued with his reading.

Thus with guidance children may become very skillful in deducing a word in context through reasoning about its meaning in a sentence, paragraph, or perhaps an entire selection.

Next just a few comments about the age-old topic of phonics. This method of word attack is still widely used and important. The way in which it is being taught in some places, however, is being criticized. I refer to that procedure in which children are taught to give verbal exaggerated sounds for separate letters as "buh" for b, "cuh" for c, etc. The critics say and rightly that letters do not have the sounds of syllables when they are blended together in words.

The point is illustrated in an incident which I witnessed in a classroom recently. The teacher presumably was helping a boy to recognize the word hat which he had met in his reading. She wrote the word on the chalkboard and said "Sound it." No response from the child. She then said "Listen while I sound it," and proceeded to say "huh uh tu." "What is it?" The child said nothing. She repeated "huh uh tu. What have I?" A great light dawned on the little fellow's face as he answered "Hiccoughs."

One way to avoid presenting letter sounds as syllables is as follows using initial consonant h as a sample. (1) Develop visual discrimination perhaps by having the children find the letter several times in a mixed arrangement of chalkboard words beginning

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with different consonants; (2) develop auditory perception by pronouncing several of the chalkboard words beginning with h, slightly emphasizing but not,isolating the sound of h; then have the pupils do the same thing; (3) give practice in blending by substituting h for the initial consonant in several known words, and have them pronounced; (4) finally apply the practice in reading a selection in which some new words beginning with h appear.

There are many, many ways of teaching phonics. The procedure outlined is only one of them.

Structural Analysis is another word-attack technique entirely apart from phonics. In our changing world there is an increasing frequency ~~in the use~~ to of modified word forms. For this reason it is very important at present to teach children to analyze and get meanings from structurally changed words. Unfortunately, this is given too little attention in large numbers of classrooms.

The elements of word structure with which children should be familiar are: words in compound words, the stem word in a modified form; the inflectional forms s, es, ed, ing, er, est; prefixes; suffixes; possessives; contractions; and syllables.

Time doesn't permit a discussion of procedures which may be used in teaching these different elements. Suffice it to say that it is fairly easy for children to grasp these elements and ways in which they change meanings.

Finally, use of the dictionary, the most complex of all the word attack processes, will be mentioned. In beginning to use a formal dictionary children must employ several previously acquired

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skills: a knowledge of alphabetical arrangement, the sounds of letters in words, and the various word structure elements. In addition they need to know diacritical marking and the effect of accent marks. Too, they must become skillful in selecting from several meanings given, the one most appropriate for the particular situation in which it is to be applied.

This very complex dictionary skill as a whole usually is not mastered until the middle grades. However, foundations may be laid even in the first grade. Some teachers place a miniature self-help dictionary on the chalkboard consisting of pictures of needed nouns and verbs with the appropriate word under each. A few publishers are placing miniature dictionaries in the back of their primers. Some publishers also are producing simple little paper-back dictionaries for primary levels including one for the first grade.

In summing up this discussion on word recognition I should like to emphasize again that there are many important word attack skills in addition to phonics. These should be taught to the disabled reader so he or she will have several tools to use in finding out unrecognized words. If one doesn't work, he or she should learn to try another and perhaps another until one is found that does work. Poor readers especially need to have several word attack skills at their command.

GIVE MORE ATTENTION TO THINKING SKILLS IN GETTING MEANINGS

Disabled readers usually need help in getting meanings from

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what they read. Regardless of how well children learn how to pronounce words, if they can't get the meanings when these words are strung together in sentences, they are destined for trouble ahead.

The word "comprehension" is a blanket term. There are different types of meaning-getting skills, just as there are different types of word-identification skills. Meaning-getting skills may be distinguished from one another in terms of the thought processes that are involved. For many years teachers made the mistake of laboring under the misconception that all they had to do to teach children to get meanings in reading was to give them some "comprehension" questions and exercises--the word "comprehension" connoting one big skill to be taught as a "lump sum." Unfortunately, there still are many classroom teachers who are making this same mistake, and this mistake may contribute to the lack of disabled readers to cope with reading materials.

On the other hand the most proficient teachers are placing emphasis upon the thinking skills. The opinions of experts, experimental research and statistical analyses indicate that there are four major categories of processes which should be used in getting meanings. Each of these in turn makes use of subordinate skills. The terms used in designating these categories are: literal comprehension, interpretation, critical reading and creative reading.

The term literal comprehension is widely used at present to name the process of getting the primary, direct, "literal" meaning

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of a word, idea, or sentence in context. Very little thinking is done in using this process. Children simply give back what is said in the book.

Unfortunately, this is the only procedure used by many teachers.

The term interpretation of reading is used to include skills concerned with supplying or anticipating meanings not stated directly in the text, such as drawing inferences, making generalizations; reasoning cause and effect; speculating on what happened between events; anticipating what will happen next; detecting the significance of a statement, passage, or selection; identifying the purpose of the writer and the motive of characters; forming sensory images; experiencing emotional reactions, etc. Thus this category includes many thinking processes.

Critical reading is the third level in the hierarchy of reading for meaning skills. It includes literal comprehension and interpretation, but it goes further than either of these in that the reader evaluates, that is, passes personal judgment on the quality, the value, the accuracy, and the truthfulness of what is read.

Creative reading is involved to some extent in interpretation and in critical reading. In these cases, however, the child is working with the text, he or she is thinking about what the author has said. In creative reading the child goes beyond the text in seeking new insights and solving new problems.

Thinking, discriminating, decision-making individuals are what we need in this troubled world. Our students can best develop

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in these ways through participation in group thinking, where each one expresses his own thinking, checks others' thinking, and is checked by others--all of this guided by an astute teacher who will toss in a remark or question at the proper moment to stimulate deeper reflection.

In concluding my discussion on meanings, I can do no better than to quote from Samuel Coleridge, the distinguished English poet, journalist, and critic. In the early 1800's Coleridge wrote:

There are four kinds of readers. The first is like the hour-glass; and their reading being as the sand, it runs in and runs out and leaves not a vestige behind. A second is like the sponge, which imbibes everything, and returns it in nearly the same state, only a little dirtier. A third is like a jelly bag, allowing all that is pure to pass away, and retaining only the refuse and dregs. And the fourth is like the slaves of Golconda, who casting aside all that is worthless, retain only pure gems.

Perhaps if classroom teachers teach the several thinking skills in reading more effectually, we shall avoid having so many disabled readers of the first three types that Coleridge mentions and produce only those who "Casting aside all that is worthless, retain only pure gems."

TEACH STUDY SKILLS IN THE CONTENT AREAS

Sometime during the course of transmission of opinions, beliefs, and customs from one generation of teachers to another, there evolved a legend to the effect that reading should be taught

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during special periods set aside for the express purpose of giving the child control over the skills of reading. Likewise legend dictated that science, geography, history, and mathematics should be taught at specific times in the daily program to develop distinctive skills or implant characteristic knowledge in each of these fields, usually with little or no consideration being given to reading development as one aspect of this specialized instruction.

As a matter of fact in most schools, even children in the first grade have beginning books in science, mathematics and social studies, social studies embracing both history and geography. These subjects are taught all through the grades and in high school. Children spend much more time reading in subject areas than they do in reading from readers and supplementary reading books, and they continue to read in subject areas long after general instruction in reading ceases.

Too, it is in the third, fourth and fifth grades that text in the subject textbooks becomes quite substantial and it is also there that the disabled reader population begins to pile up.

Surely, the elementary classroom teacher, if he or she teaches science, social studies and mathematics, or the special subject teacher if the school is so organized, has a major responsibility in teaching children how to read in these subject areas.

Specialized vocabulary is a consideration. Each subject carries its own vocabulary. For example: probably no one would dispute the fact that magnets, terrarium, velocity are peculiar to the subject of science; that abolition, fortress, proclamation

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belong particularly to the field of history; that hemisphere, continent, and equator are special geography words, and that subtraction, cancellation and divisor are definitely mathematics words. Large numbers of children would profit from development and guided discussion of such words.

Too, studies have indicated that there are unique differences in skills used in different subject matter fields; and that while "general reading ability" is operative in all reading to a certain extent, there is also definite need for the development of specific skills to use in these different curricular areas. Research has also shown that these specialized skills can be improved if singled out and given practice.

Personally, I analyzed 200 textbooks at different levels to find out what children had to do in reading when working with science, social studies and mathematics text. I discovered that these subjects made use of different patterns of writing, and these patterns called for different reading skills.

However, there are some study skills that are common to all subjects. These common study skills are: selection and evaluation, organization, recall, location of information and following directions. Practice should be given on any of these as needed by children when working in the different subject areas.

Because of time limitations I can only state the different patterns of writing and will be unable to describe them.

First, the specialized patterns in science are: classification; explanation of a technical process; instructions for carrying out

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an experiment; the cause and effect pattern; detailed statement of facts pattern; problem-solving situations; abbreviations, symbols and equations.

In social studies we have maps, atlases and globes; cause and effect which occurs with the highest frequency in this area, sequential events and their dates, and comparison and contrast. If students identify these patterns in science and social studies and read in terms of each pattern excellent results are obtained.

Mathematics content is very compact. It is usually composed of short paragraphs which unlike other subjects usually contain words mixed with numerals or mathematical symbols. In later grades children need to recognize at a glance figures such as the triangle, pyramid, cube, cylinder and many others.

The chief characteristic of mathematics is that it predominently contains problems to solve and this requires very careful thinking and reasoning.

The differences between reading and mathematics should be discussed with children and they should be urged to read problems carefully before working them on paper.

The above suggestions apply to mathematics as it is often taught in English-speaking countries and not to the metric system now being used in many places.

At present interest in teaching reading in the content areas is high. Studies, articles and materials for children on this topic are rapidly appearing. This is good for the classroom teacher or special subject teacher has a big job at hand in teaching

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children to read in the subject fields. Those who take this responsibility and perform it faithfully and well, will contribute tremendously to preventing the casualty of increasing numbers of disabled readers.

FLUENCY AND RATE

Reading fluently and rapidly is another basic skill development area and one which has become a topic of interest the world over.

There is an exaggerated emphasis on speed at this time. Many adults and teenagers consider that a high reading rate is the epitomy of being an excellent reader. They seem to think that a person should have one set very high rate for reading everything.

I was director of the reading center at New York University for several years and among other offerings we scheduled evening classes in adult reading improvement. Sometimes I would pass through the hall while those who had come to take the course were registering. Invariably, they would ask me such questions as: "How many words per minute should I read?" or "How many words per minute will I be able to read when I finish this course?" I would often ask in return, "How many words per minute to read what? An easy popular article in the Reader's Digest? A scientific article packed with facts which you wish to fix in mind? A beautiful piece of literature in which you wish to pause for a bit to enjoy an intriguing expression or to reread a passage that has special charm or appeal for you? Again I ask How many words per minute to read what?"

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The registrants would look quite puzzled and confounded when I would answer them in this fashion. But they would come to realize what I meant as the course proceeded for we taught them that there were many different kinds of material in reading and different purposes for reading but with practice a person's various rates could be improved in pursuing all of the materials and purposes. Flexibility should be the watch-word in speed improvement.

In the primary grades fluency should be the major objective. Lip-reading and finger-pointing must be broken up, and children urged to "read like they talk." Studies indicate that one of the best ways to promote rate at this level is to encourage wide reading of easy interesting material. Having them read selections for specific purposes serves as a spur to reading rate, also.

In the middle grades the practices used in the primary grades should be continued for any who need them. Purposeful reading and copious reading should be emphasized especially.

Studies indicate that systematic speed practice may best be initiated at fourth or fifth grade levels. It may be all right to give an informal check of reading rate in third grade, but according to research, systematic speed practice should be delayed till later.

There are published materials providing speed practice in some places but these are not really necessary. Each teacher may prepare his or her own practice material based on the content of the classroom textbooks and used successively at intervals throughout the year.

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DEVELOP INTEREST IN READING

Interest is the touchstone to reading achievement. Many disabled readers have no interest in reading. In fact they dislike it and avoid it, seeking their communication satisfactions in television and pictured comic strips. Some teachers contribute to this lack of interest through their use of heavy drill work unaccompanied with interest-provoking activities.

I understand that here in Austria you are very successful in stimulating interest through your arrangements for out-of-school book-clubs. I was happy to hear about this and would be pleased to have more details concerning the plan so I could pass the information along to others.

Studies have shown that several factors and provisions may have favorable effects on interest.

1. The enthusiasm of the teacher. It appears that if the teacher is enthusiastic about books and reading, he or she somehow generates this enthusiasm to pupils.

2. Consulting with parents is useful. Parents should know what to do and what not to do, they should be encouraged to have books for their child at home, and given advice concerning topics of interest, and level of difficulty of books they buy for him or her.

3. Recommending books to children has been found to be very effective. The teacher of course should not say "this is the book that is right for you." Rather should the recommendation be indirectly as, "This is one of the most interesting books I have

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ever read. I'll place it on the book table for any of you who would like to read it"; or "Joe, this is a book that answers some of the questions you were asking me about airplanes. I'll place it here if you wish to pick it up sometime."

4. Making an abundance of books available to the children in the classroom. Books representing many topics and levels of difficulty should be at hand for free reading. Be sure the supply includes plenty of books easy enough for the disabled readers.

One of the biggest problems often is that of providing this large supply of books due to the very limited budgets of many schools.

Here are a few suggestions which may be useful: You may borrow from central school libraries, public libraries, and bookmobiles. These sources usually often will loan a teacher twenty to thirty books a month. The children may also borrow from libraries and bring books from their own collections at home. Many parents are willing to buy one book to add to the classroom collection.

LOOK FORWARD TO TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN READING

We must face up to the use of technology in the future teaching of reading. We are undergoing a technological revolution the world over. Technology has changed the patterns of progress in all major strands of civilization and it is beginning to change progress patterns in reading, also. The use of technological devices is appealing to disabled readers, and apparently effective with them.

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In some places films, film strips, slides, transparencies and tapes are now commonly used in teaching reading. Television, computers and even satellites are now entering the area of teaching methodology.

Experiments in the use of television to teach reading over large areas are now being conducted with good results. Cable television and even satellites are undergoing consideration and experimentation as teaching media.

Perhaps the most spectacular technological device for reading instruction is the computer. I will give you one example of the use of the computer in reading. This report describes a procedure used in the Brentwood School, Palo Alto, California.

"The master computer that does the teaching has eighteen terminals. As the children come to the classroom, each one sits down before a screen at the end of his terminal. Various pictures,, letters or words begin to dance on this screen in front of him. Soon he is asked by the computer to make a response. This he does with a light-projecting pen. If the response is correct, the computer says "good!" If it is wrong, the computer says "Nooooo." If there is a hesitation of more than 5 to 10 seconds, the computer says decisively, "Do it now!" If the child still sits and does nothing at all, the computer taps out a distress signal calling the teacher."

Computer experiments with disabled readers as well as normal readers are mostly favorable.

It would be extremely hazardous to venture even a guess when

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computers, television, and satellites may be used to some extent the world over for reading instruction. This may happen during the lifetime of most of you and we may as well be ready for it. In my opinion, however, machines will never take the place of teachers. There always will be moral, social and educational values which cannot be developed solely through the use of machines, but which from now until eternity must be achieved through association of human beings with other human beings. Most definitely teachers of reading will still be needed in the future.

INTRODUCE GREATER FLEXIBILITY IN CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION

The Three-Group or Two-Group Plan

For an undeterminable number of years the three-group or two-group form of classroom organization has prevailed in most places. Trends to loosen up this grouping plan are now taking place, much to the benefit of disabled readers.

In the traditional three-group plan, the teacher divides his or her class into groups according to reading ability: the fast-moving group, the average group and the slow group. In the two-group plan there is the best group and a poorer group. In either case each group is taught as a whole each day working at a certain place in a basic reader.

This traditional plan is being criticized by many educators. As a result adjustments are being made to supplement it in several ways. There may be times when pupils in the entire class meet together to read for some purpose, temporary small groups may be

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formed to serve the skill needs of some children. Interest groups may be formed in terms of a topic of special interest of certain children. In these and other ways the three-group or two-group plan may become much more flexible.

The Individualized Approach

In contrast to the three-group or two-group plan, the individualized approach is now being adopted in many places. Permanent groups in reading are done away with entirely in the individualized classroom.

Briefly the procedure most generally used in individualized classrooms may be summarized as follows:

Each child selects a book that he or she wants to read. During the individual conference period the teacher sits in some particular spot in the room as each child comes and reads to him or her. During this period the child's individual needs are noted and appropriate help is given. Finally the teacher writes what the child is reading, his needs, and strengths on a record card. Then another individual conference is held, and so on. If several children need help on the same skills, they may be called together in a group for instruction and practice.

As in the more flexible three-group or two-group plans, sessions with the whole class may be held at times. Charts evolving from a mutual experience or based on plans for activities, questions to which answers are sought, directions for going somewhere or doing something--all such mutually prepared charts call for whole-group participation and provide opportunities for whole-group reading. Notices placed on the chalkboard or bulletin board are read by the entire group.

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The whole class may also be involved in planning activities, such as planning procedures for book selection or for individual conferences, planning what to do for independent work, and planning sharing experiences in which one child or a group will share their reading with the class as a whole. Sometimes a new reading skill is introduced to the group as a whole. Whenever there is a need or a reason for the entire class to work together, whole-class grouping may ensue. It's up to the teacher. There is nothing in the philosophy of the individualized plan itself which precludes functional whole-group participation in a reading activity.

Small group arrangements take place often. Sometimes children who are reading or have read the same book gather in a group to "talk it over." Such discussion may lead to plans for some sharing activity, such as a dramatization, puppet show, or mock radio or television program. At other times, children reading the same book may work with the teacher as a group during the usual individual conference period.

Now and then two or three children who like to be together socially gather in one spot when reading from their individual books. Usually there is considerable oral reading to each other in such a group, and often the children help each other with unrecognized words.

Interest groups emerge at times. Four or five children may become interested in elephants, for example. Regardless of their different levels of ability they may work together, each sharing information and interesting incidents from the book or story he is

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reading at his own ability level.

Skill groups are frequently formed to meet individual needs. If two or three or several children need help on the same skill, these children meet as a group with the teacher for development of and practice on the skill. This group is disbanded one by one as children master the skill, and new groups, possibly composed of some of these children and others, assemble to meet other skill needs.

Thus individualized instruction may also provide for some grouping to supplement the basic plan of having each child progress at his or her own rate.

This individualized plan is emerging rapidly in many countries. Because it provides opportunities for skill development in terms of individual requirements and stages of growth it should enable the classroom teacher more effectually to meet the needs of disabled readers.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion perhaps we may assume that we are now arriving at a philosophy in reading instruction which will enable us to apply a discovery made by Charles, the Fifth.

Charles, the Fifth was born right here in this beautiful city of Vienna, April 16, 1643. He had a tremendous empire over which to rule--Austria, Spain, the Netherlands, Sicily, Naples, Germany, and Spain's colonies in the new world. The sway of Alexander, alone, is to be compared with that which was within the grasp of Charles.

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He started in at his huge job at the age of sixteen. He stuck to it until he was quite old, and then one day, becoming tired of the tinsel and show of a king, he handed over his empire to his two sons, loaded up a caravan of carts with all the clocks that he could buy, beg, or borrow and hied himself off to a community of monks in a lost corner of Spain.

There between lauds and matins and vespers he spent the remainder of his life trying to make the clocks keep time together. This he was never able to do.

"How foolish I have been," he said one day, "to try to make men think and do and move together, when I can't even make two clocks agree." And having gained this wisdom, he stopped striving to make either clocks or men work in unison, and spent the last days of his life in peace and happiness in the old monastery in a remote corner of Spain.

It has been over three centuries since Charles learned this lesson about men and clocks. It has been over two centuries since we began teaching children to read. Perhaps we are just beginning to realize how foolish we have been in thinking that children should"think and do and move together" in learning to read.